

XXVIII. - Resumption.

For he must reign as King, until he shall have put all the enemies under his feet.

1 COR. 15:25.

So, we now, at the conclusion of the second series, return to the road we have travelled, the Kingdom of Christ will be revealed in its full majesty.

The starting point is and remains the Kingship of God, Triune to man.

Triune to mankind in paradise. That Kingship was lost to mankind by his apostasy from God. And it is this same Kingship that returns and is restored in Christ, yes, raised above its original glory.

Now about this Kingship conferred on man in paradise, it is certain that it will be restored in Christ.

It is now clear that this kingship, which was granted to man in paradise, included man's dominion over all of nature, i.e., over everything that belongs to this earth outside of man. The majesty with which Adam had all the animals appear before him and expressed their character and essence in a name was a symbolic representation of the majesty of this dominion. But this dominion stretched further still. It is true that in his first appearance man was placed below the angels, but the end would be that we would judge the angels and be above them. This can be explained by the fact that an angel is ready at once, whereas man has a long road of development to go through, and only at the end of that road does he reach the full revelation of his power. He therefore begins by being less than the angels, but ends by being above them. In relation to mankind, the angels are not the objects of our worship, but "serving spirits" who try to see salvation in us, but cannot fathom it themselves. Thus, for the original human being, the authority over the spirit world is added to the authority over the whole earth. Even though Creation consists of parts, those parts are nevertheless interconnected, and the unity of that interconnection must, according to the original order, be expressed in the fact that man becomes the creature that brings all other creatures under his dominion, in order to priestly dedicate the whole of this creation to God and to consecrate it to Him for all eternity. The fact that mankind could be destined for such a high lordship in paradise is explained by his creation in the image and likeness of God. Through that creation in God's image, it was possible for man, as he was of God's lineage, also to become perfect one day, as his Father in heaven is perfect. Thus, man was prepared to be, both in man alone and in mankind as a whole, a temple to

God, a dwelling place of the Holy One, so that God would be in man and man in God. God all in all, through man as vicegerent under God the Triune.

Thus, man stood extremely high in the plan of creation and in the ideal to be realized, which this plan referred to. Yes, it is impossible to imagine a higher position for the creature than that which, according to the Scriptures, was given to man. If, therefore, man had progressed without hindrance from his first creation to the complete fulfillment of his divine purpose, his immediate dominion over all things visible would have transferred him to a world of wonders; in that world of wonders he would have been sanctified in his own being; Even the spirit world would have been subjected to him; and in the end, earth and heaven, the material and spiritual world, all that is visible and all that is invisible, would have sung a single Hallelujah to God Triune, because all had been voluntarily submitted to God through man made in God's image, in such a way that it would have been a sacred thing: God all in all" became a reality.

In this creation program of the Kingship of unsung mankind, the holy program of the Kingship of Christ is also given. God remains the same. He does not change. Therefore, even if there is a disturbance in His creation, this does not invalidate His counsel. That disorder is also included in His counsel. And when that disorder sets in, and the whole original plan of Creation seems to be frustrated, God's work nevertheless goes on calmly, and in the end we see how, in the end, the original plan of Creation is carried out precisely as ordained by God. The Kingship of Christ simply replaces the lost Kingship of mankind; and this not as a different kind of thing but as entirely the same. Therefore, the Word becomes flesh and this King assumes our human nature, equal to us human beings in every way, except, of course, for the sin that brought about the breakdown. The Kingship of Christ, in His Mediatorial form, is also a dominion over nature and over the spirit world; it is a dominion that encompasses all of creation in unity, that priestly dedicates it to God and that submits it royally to the Triune God. And the end is also now, that in mankind the dwelling place of God, the holy temple, is opened, and that, when everything is accomplished and finished, this Kingdom too is given over to God, that God may be all and in all.

Thus, the Kingship of Christ comes, and it is this that first creates the stability, not as a strange thing in the whole of creation life, but it has grown into it, it is demanded by it, it flowed from it as if by itself, under God's high order. The disorder does not arise from man, but from the spirit world. The spirit world knew

that it was itself about to be subjected to man, and from it arose the impulse to turn God's plan around, so that now it had to be destroyed.

From this arose the impulse to reverse God's plan, so that it would now be reversed: man would be subjected to the mighty Sovereign who ruled over the spirit world. The fall and waste of Satan therefore lie behind the fall of man. Satan rebelled first. It is plausible that, in connection with this, a disturbance of this earth and of nature took place even before man entered Paradise, and that it may be explained by this that this earth was "desolate and empty and darkness reigned on the precipice. Satan's change then resulted in the fall of mankind as well. Man also fell, but he did not fall like Satan. Because there was no process of development in the spirit world, Satan's fall was an instantaneous and complete fall, and salvation and restoration for the world of demons is impossible. But man had such a process of development to go through. His fall, therefore, was not an instantaneous total apostasy. Man's fall allowed for the possibility of his return. Hence, from the moment of his fall, Satan's tremendous spiritual struggle against the saints. From Satan's side, a stubbornly persistent struggle to draw man further and further away from God, and, conversely, a surpassing mercy from God's side, to draw man to Himself again, to free him from Satan's original embrace, and in the end to carry on and complete His plan with man. First, Satan's efforts continue. Sin gains the upper hand. In the curse, the distortion of nature is continued, paradise disappears, and man is introduced to a world that brings him thorns and thistles, but always in such a way that man will be able to draw his life's existence from that world in the sweat of his eyes. At the same time, however, sin permeates his society from his heart, and the whole of man's society in family, tribe, people and nation is increasingly dominated by Satan's influence. So strong, that in the end a situation comes about in which it already appears that the life of this world has been completely withdrawn from God, so that Satan can be called the Prince of this world, thereby standing in direct opposition to the original Kingship of mankind. The kingship of mankind is gone. Instead of being King of creation, man has become the slave of sin and thus the servant of the ruler of the world.

But at the same time the continuation of God's original creation plan begins in paradise. According to God's will, counsel and order, not Satan, but man was to be the ruler of the world below and the ruler of the spirit world above. And thus began in paradise the working of God's grace, which in the end will show how Satan and his power are vanquished, and how mankind triumphs, despite his fall, despite the curse he brought upon himself, and despite the humiliation he brought upon

himself. This could not have come from fallen man himself. The fall broke his strength and devoured his glory. The unity of the generation was destroyed by it, and in its division, weak and powerless, sinful mankind had no defense against the power of Satan. That is why God destined his only begotten Son to enter into the life of this world; to take on our human nature; as the Head of mankind, to gather the divided and disintegrated world back into one unit and unite it in one body; to cancel the sin of the world as a debt to the Holy One through his own blood; and then to re-establish in his own person the Kingship of mankind that had been lost. Thus, to fight Satan and the demons and to drive them back; to implant new life in redeemed man; thereby to make his heart a dwelling-place of God; and thus in the end to realize the original plan of creation, according to which our human race, created in God's image, would exercise dominion over both the visible and the invisible world, so that through man as a link God would be all and in all, in His whole creation, brought together in holy unity. Thus, everything ends in the nullification of the interference brought about by Satan. God, and through God mankind, triumphs, His counsel exists. And in the end, it becomes clear how Satan's interference was not only utterly powerless to undo God's order, but how even Satan's interference only served to make God's virtues stand out more gloriously, and to extend the final triumph even beyond what paradise promised.

This restored Kingship, which in Christ passes from man in general to the "Son of Man", begins with the declaration that the Woman's Seed will crush Satan's head, and later becomes the all-important factor in the history of our generation. When Memphis and Thebes, Nineveh and Babylon, Athens and Rome have played their roles, the spiritual atmosphere emanates from Jerusalem, which first in Europe, and later in America, calls forth a whole new, much higher human life. This time in the history of the world was prepared in the creation of the people sanctified to God in Israel. This nation comes into being through separation, through the separation of a single part from the whole. This begins with Noah, yes even partly with Seth, and in the calling of the first Patriarch and his sending from the heart of Asia to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, the foundation is laid for the Israel that is to come. And finally, under Moses, that Israel begins its career as a people, then the Theocracy under David and his House develops into an exemplary Kingship, which may well fade away again to show that it was only exemplary and not the real thing, but the idea of the King nevertheless takes hold in Israel, the Messianic prophecy hangs on to it, and the impressive declaration: "I have anointed my King over Zion, the mountain of my holiness", raises the expectation of the King among

all those who fear God. It all prays, it all waits, it all feels the nostalgia for the King who is to come, for the King who already existed in the heavens according to God's order, but who still had to wait to enter our human nature. Before he appeared, the history of the nations had to have reached the required point, and the ground had to have been prepared in Israel that would enable the Christ to display his power and to join our human race.

And now the Son of Man appears after his name of Immanuel. He is not a man of man, but the Son of God, who took on our human nature. Herein lay the mystery, but a mystery that gradually revealed itself. Now it appeared that the "God all and in all" could not come about because man approached God, but could only be realized because God Himself pushed His approach to man so far, that in the Son God Himself became united with our family by taking on our human nature. Not "us with God" but "God with us". Immanuel had to be the starting point. It was not man who could take on divine nature, but God who could take on human nature. Not the image of the Image of God could become one with this Image; but he who was the Image of the invisible God could unite with the Image of that Image in one person. And when the end of the ages came, when God would be all and in all, the honor would not be for man, but for God. We had not sought God, but had turned away from Him. And it was He who then moved towards us, approached us, entered into our nature, and transformed our hearts into His temple and dwelling place. For this reason, Bethlehem was so far above Paradise, and only Bethlehem could accomplish what had been promised in Paradise, but not accomplished.

And when the Christ appeared, man's power over nature and the spirit world, the kingship ordained in paradise, was again revealed in Him.

The Evangelist Mark is addressed with the sign of the lion, the king of the forest, and it is especially in the Gospel of Mark that the royal action of Jesus is expressed in his exercise of royal power over nature, over mankind and over the spirit world. Royal power is evident in his words, there is royal majesty in his actions, there is royal power in his miracles and royal power is evident in his dominion over the demons, and royal majesty no less from the way in which he resists and rejects the Petitioner, confronts his enemies, and willingly takes up his cross; and above all, royal power from his breaking of the bonds of death in his resurrection, and later in his ascension in glory. Thus, already during his circumambulation on earth, in this Son of Man, man's original dominion, man's royal power over all creatures, and at the same time his absolute soul union with God Triune, had become true.

Yet all of this still remained local. It was bound to land and place, and therefore shone only in a limited circle among one people among the many nations. But this changed completely with Jesus' ascension. Now he has risen to the throne, high above all peoples and nations, above all spheres of the spirit world, in a word, above all creatures. From now on his twofold regiment begins. On the one hand, His royal regiment over the born-again and believers, and on the other hand, His royal regiment over all of God's creation, over all that is visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth. It is from this moment on that he becomes the Head of the mystical Body, and at the same time that God Triune rules all things through the Mediator. For the first purpose he incorporates his redeemed, takes them in as living members in his mystical Body; causes the life to flow out of him into that Body; and governs, protects and exalts it as the Head of sanctified mankind. He establishes his Church on earth, and even though this Church is only the earthly shell of his mystical Body, insofar as it still resides on earth, yet the born-again members of that Church constitute the true component, so that the Church and the mystical Body often appear to be one and will indeed be one in the triumphant Church above. In this mystical body he pours out the Holy Spirit, thereby already creating a situation on earth in which the unification of man with God, through the action of God in the heart of man, as in his temple, is brought about. But neither that Church nor that mystical Body is singled out from the world, nor isolated from the world. Both stand and live on in the midst of the life of the world, and form, in view of the eternal ideal, the core and the center of it. The dominion of our King over his mystical Body, and the dominion of the Son of Man over all power, are interwoven at every point. Because he bears all things by the word of his power, he can arrange and direct all things in such a way that his congregation will endure and not be pressed to death. And because he is the Head of the mystical Body, he can cause all kinds of forces and influences to emanate from his mystical Body on the development of our gender in the world, which will raise all human life to a higher position. The two very distinct parts of his royal rule interact with each other. He has power over his own in soul and body, in destiny and in inner development. And likewise, he has power over everything that is alive and fermenting in the world and brewing in the spirit world.

This rule of our King is exercised partly by him directly, and partly, under his high command and guidance, by the angels, by his ministers on earth and by his spiritual subjects; but the latter always in such a way that our King himself takes his subjects into his service, appoints his ministers, commands and sends out his

angels, and grants his servants the powers they need to accomplish their tasks. The period in which this action of our King proceeds is the period in which the age-long process of opposing his Kingdom of completion continues, and in which he furthermore creates all possibilities, indeed tolerates, permits and even provokes the strongest manifestations of power on the part of his enemies, in order that this victory may be complete. And once this point has been reached, then consummation will come. That consummation will not come in the orderly course of things, but will break off that course of history. That is the moment when our King will return to this earth, subdue and expel the last enemy at his feet, and, after the judgment, usher in the kingdom of glory. Thus, will he manifest his royal power over all spirits of men and angels and demons. Then he will manifest his power over our bodies by raising them to glory. Then he will manifest his royal power over all this earth, by renewing it under a new heaven. And when everything has been completed, and God's order and counsel will have triumphed on every point, then the Son of Man will also have completed his royal office of mediation, and will hand over the recovered and now glorified creation to God Triune, so that God may be all and in all. Far therefore from the Kingdom of Christ being exclusively a spiritual exercise of power in and among the believers, it is a world dominion, indeed a dominion over all creation, and the history of this world, indeed the history of creation as a whole, moves around that Kingship of Christ as its all-pervading center. The world does not see, understand or know this. Unconsciously it undergoes its influences and its exercise of power, until in the end, to its horror and amazement, it will see with its eyes how blind it has been to what has moved it and controlled its course. And therefore, we pray to him whose eye has already been opened to this royal majesty here on earth; who in his kingdom may serve him here; and who, when the hour of his separation from this earth comes, will be awaited by his King above.